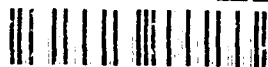


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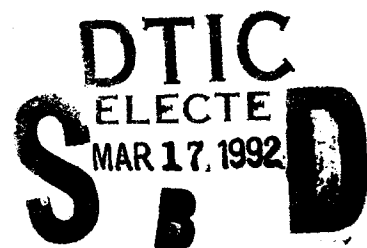
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## PREPARATION OF FIBERS WITH ENHANCED ULTRAVIOLET (UV) REFLECTANCE FOR ARCTIC CAMOUFLAGE

By  
Mark J. Hepfinger  
Lisa B. Hepfinger  
Peter J. Olejarz

December 1991

Final Report  
October 1990 - April 1991



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92-06858



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1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 1991		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final OCT 90 - APR 91	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Preparation of Fibers with Enhanced Ultraviolet (UV) Reflectance for Arctic Camouflage				5. FUNDING NUMBERS PE-728012.12 PR-OMA 1267	
6. AUTHOR(S) Mark J. Hepfinger, Lisa B. Hepfinger, and Peter J. Olejarski					
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Natick Research, Development and Engineering Center ATTN: STRNC-IT Natick, MA 01760-5019				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER NATICK/TR-92/014	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public distribution; distribution unlimited				12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)  Samples of fiber containing different loadings of Zirconium Oxide and Titanium Dioxide were prepared using standard melt spinning techniques. These samples were then compared to the Arctic Camouflage fabric using Ultraviolet (UV) photography. This report evaluates the parameters for incorporation of Zirconium Oxide into the fiber structure, including stability, processing parameters and the effect on the UV reflectance. The fiber containing Zirconium Oxide shows a higher UV reflectance than either the Arctic Camouflage Fabric or samples containing Titanium Dioxide.					
14. SUBJECT TERMS FIBERS ZIRCONIUM OXIDES ZIRCONIUM OXIDE		TITANIUM DIOXIDE FABRICS ARCTIC CLOTHING CAMOUFLAGE		ULTRAVIOLET PHOTOGRAPHY ARCTIC NYLON REFLECTANCE NYLON 6 SNOW	
15. NUMBER OF PAGES 23		16. PRICE CODE			
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified		18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified		19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	
20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL					

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## PREFACE

This report outlines a study to determine the processing and fiber forming characteristics of Nylon 6,6 fiber containing up to 10% loadings of Zirconium Oxide ( $ZrO_2$ ) and Titanium Dioxide ( $TiO_2$ ) for use in arctic camouflage. The evaluation was performed by the Fiber Project in conjunction with the Countersurveillance Section, Countersurveillance and Process Technology Branch, Materials Research and Engineering Division, Individual Protection Directorate.

The authors would like to express their appreciation to Ms. Margaret Goode, Individual Protection Directorate, for performing the Scanning Electron Microscope work and Mr. Thomas E. Rohnstock for conducting all of the Rheology work.

PREPARATION OF FIBERS WITH ENHANCED ULTRAVIOLET (UV)  
REFLECTANCE FOR ARCTIC CAMOUFLAGE

1. INTRODUCTION.

Ultraviolet photography is a form of detection used in snow-covered environments. Snow has high UV reflectance values, whereas man-made objects generally have low UV reflectances. In fabric systems, especially, the use of Titanium Dioxide ( $\text{TiO}_2$ ) as a dulling agent causes very low UV reflectance. For comparison, Figures 1 and 2 show a piece of the current arctic camouflage fabric against a snow background. Figure 1 shows the daylight appearance and Figure 2 shows the appearance with a UV filter. In Figure 1, the fabric is practically indistinguishable from the snow, and in Figure 2 it is readily discernible.



Figure 1. Comparison of the Arctic Camouflage Fabric to Snow in Full Sunlight.





Figure 2. Comparison of the Arctic Camouflage Fabric to Snow  
using a UV Filter.

Currently, vehicle paints for use in arctic areas contain Zirconium Oxide ( $ZrO_2$ ), which has reflectance values in the UV that provide a good match to snow.<sup>1</sup> Attempts have been made to treat fabrics with coatings containing  $ZrO_2$  for use in camouflage nets.<sup>2,3</sup> The coating increases the fabric weight significantly which would be unacceptable if applied to military uniform fabric.

Substituting  $ZrO_2$  for  $TiO_2$  and adding to the solution prior to extruding fiber, in place of topically treating the fabric, would increase UV reflectance without adding weight. In an effort to add UV protection to the individual soldier's uniform without adding excess weight, a preliminary study was undertaken to investigate methods of incorporating  $ZrO_2$  into nylon fiber.

The study was subdivided into four tasks:

- a. Determine the particle size distribution for  $\text{ZrO}_2$ .
- b. Evaluate processing characteristics and degradation.
- c. Prepare fibers containing up to 10% of  $\text{ZrO}_2$  and  $\text{TiO}_2$  in Nylon.
- d. Compare UV reflectance of fibers to Arctic Camouflage Fabric.

Each of these tasks is addressed in more detail in the following sections.

## 2. PROCEDURES.

### a. Particle Size Analysis:

Preparation of continuous filament textile grade yarns containing inorganic pigments or additives requires evaluation of the particle size to prevent clogging of the spinnerette orifice and formation of weak points in the yarn. A textile grade filament may have diameters less than 0.02 mm (20 microns) so particle sizes for the pigments used need to be much less than this diameter. As an example,  $\text{TiO}_2$  can be obtained with uniform particle sizes of 0.8 microns which are easily dispersed and do not clog the orifice.<sup>4</sup> The spinnerette orifice used for this work was 0.25 mm. or 250 microns. The target diameter for the filaments was 20-25 microns.

Figure 3 is a Scanning Electron Micrograph (SEM) of a sample of  $\text{ZrO}_2$  at a magnification of 1500X. The instrument used for this micrograph was an AMRAY Model 1000A Scanning Electron Microscope.

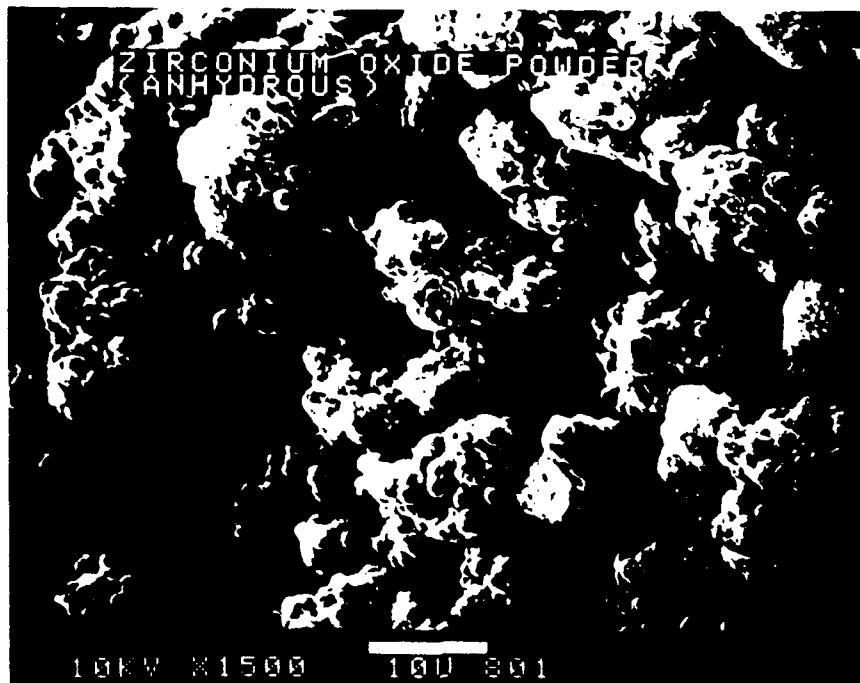


Figure 3. Scanning Electron Micrograph of Zirconium Dioxide.

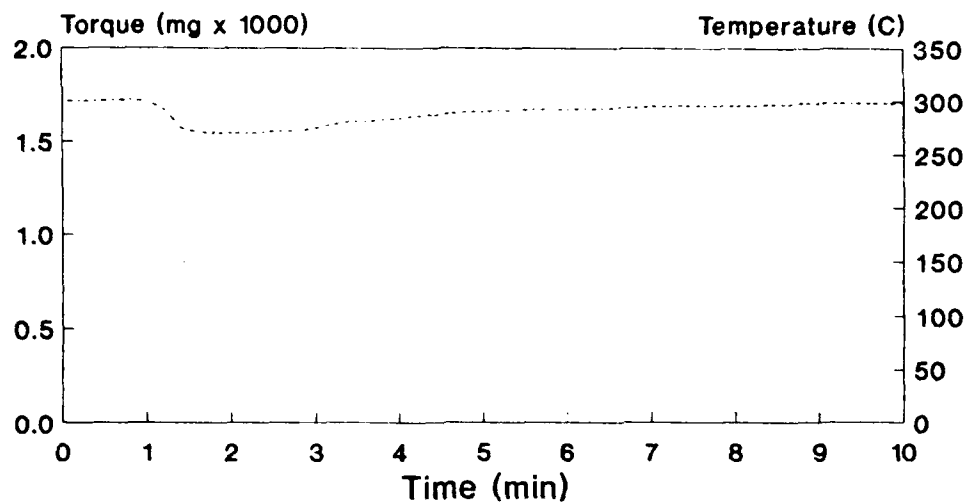
The  $\text{ZrO}_2$  used consisted of individual particle sizes between 2 and 3 microns as determined by randomly choosing three areas and measuring all particles within the areas. This data is listed in Table 1. Agglomeration (clusters) of particles were as large as 20 microns. However, these break up during the extrusion process or are filtered out by a series of fine screens (50-300 mesh) located before the spinnerette. Particle size was not evaluated for the  $\text{TiO}_2$  since it was already in concentrate form and had been used successfully for fiber spinning on previous occasions. No anti-agglomerates were evaluated during this work.

Table 1. Particle and Cluster Size Analysis.

<u>Particle Measurements (microns)</u>			
	Area #1	Area #2	Area #3
Range	1.56 - 2.68	1.67 - 4.03	2.01 - 3.69
Average	2.15	2.40	2.81
<u>Cluster Measurements (microns)</u>			
	Area #1	Area #2	Area #3
Range	6.04 - 19.26	9.07 - 19.14	5.71 - 12.09
Average	6.36	13.54	9.07

b. Polymer Stability:

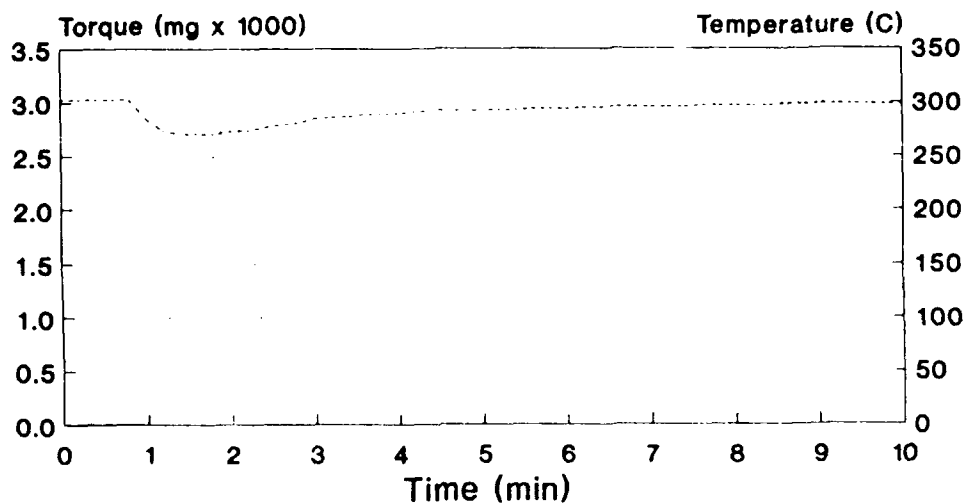
Prior to attempting fiber preparation, samples of Nylon 6,6 containing 5% of  $ZrO_2$  and 5%  $TiO_2$  were tested for stability and flow characteristics using a Haake Buchler (System 40) Torque Rheometer. Testing was conducted with the 600 Series Mixer set at a constant temperature profile of  $295^{\circ}C$ . With rotors turning at a constant speed of 20 RPM, a sample charge of 51.3 grams was added to the mixer. Figures 4 and 5 show torque values vs. time for the samples containing 5%  $ZrO_2$  and 5%  $TiO_2$  in nylon 6,6 resin, respectively.



Torque      Temperature

Haake Buchler System 40 Torque Rheometer

Figure 4. Torque vs. Time Curve for Nylon 6,6 containing 5% Zirconium Oxide.

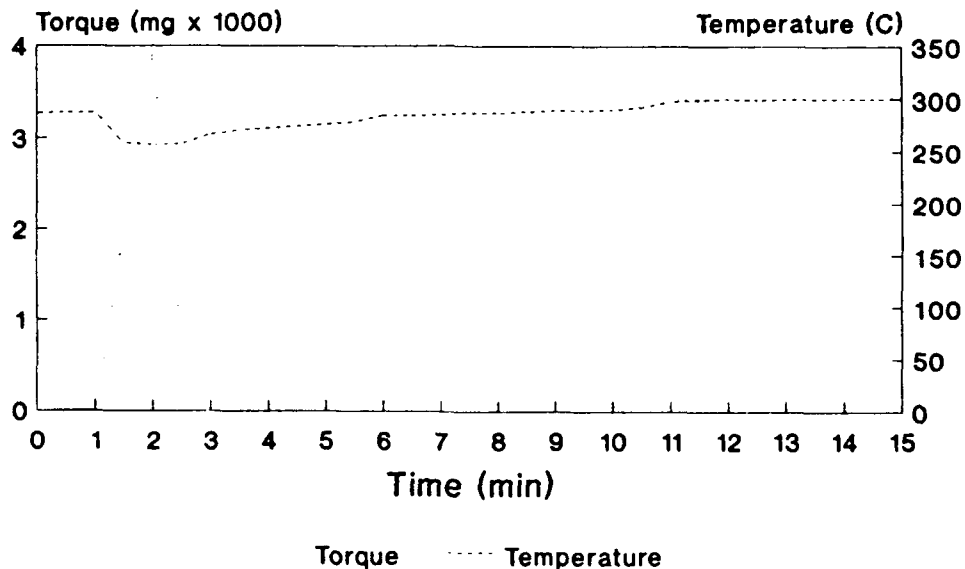


Torque      Temperature

Haake Buchler System 40 Torque Rheometer

Figure 5. Torque vs. Time Curve for Nylon 6,6 containing 5% Titanium Dioxide.

The torque curves for all of the samples exhibit standard behavior. The curves show a sudden increase in torque, which is known as the loading peak, with a simultaneous reduction in temperature as the cooler material takes on heat from the mixer. As the material melts and becomes more fluid, a substantial reduction in torque is seen with a corresponding stabilization of temperature. In both Figures 4 and 5, a shoulder is apparent on the loading peak. This was caused by a small amount of material that caught in the loading chute and fell into the mixer after most of the sample had already melted. This does not indicate any substantial variation from standard behavior. A standard torque curve for nylon 6,6 is included as Figure 6.



Haake Buchler System 40 Torque Rheometer

Figure 6. Torque vs. Time Curve for Nylon 6,6 Standard.

From this data, it can be projected that there should be no major problems in processing due to instability. All indications are that the samples will process at conditions similar to those for nylon 6,6 alone.

c. Fiber Preparation:

Fiber spinning was performed using a Research Spinning Machine (REX) designed by Hills Research and Development Inc. Spinning conditions are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Research Spinning Machine Parameters for Fiber Preparation.

Extruder Temperatures

Zone 1	-	270°C
Zone 2	-	275°C
Zone 3	-	285°C
Spin Head	-	290°C
Extruder Pressure	-	200 psi.
Pack Pressure	-	900 - 1000 psi.
Draw Ratio	-	2.5 : 1

Using the extrusion conditions outlined in Table 2, samples were prepared containing 5 and 10%  $\text{ZrO}_2$ . In addition, a sample of fiber containing 10%  $\text{TiO}_2$  was also prepared. Additional levels were not attempted due to limited quantities of material. The only difference between the processing characteristics of the two materials was the tendency for the pack pressure to be slightly higher when using  $\text{ZrO}_2$ .

Fiber samples were not drawn down to the full extent possible due to the limited amount of material and small samples attempted. Substantial run times are required to optimize the throughput and draw ratio to obtain

a textile grade fiber. Drawing a fiber introduces a higher degree of orientation (i.e. crystallinity) to the fiber and consequently more strength. Samples were wound onto sample cards and submitted for evaluation using ultraviolet photography.

All materials were dried at 125°C under vacuum (30 in. Hg.) overnight. The spinnerette used was a 48 hole jet with a round cross section. Sample descriptions are listed in the Appendix.

#### d. Ultraviolet Photography:

Photographs were taken of the samples using the procedure outlined in Kodak Publication M-27. A Kodak 18A filter, which transmits only long wave ultraviolet (from about 320 to 400 nm), was used to isolate the ultraviolet reflectance of the samples on film. A 35 mm camera with Kodak 400 speed film for color prints was used with varying exposure times.

The sample cards were placed next to a sample of the arctic camouflage material (MIL-C-3924G, Cloth, Oxford, Cotton Warp and Nylon filling, Quarrel Treated, Class 1) in full sunlight and UV photographs were taken. Figure 7 shows the samples containing 5 and 10%  $ZrO_2$ , and 10%  $TiO_2$  with the arctic fabric, in full sunlight without the filter and Figure 8 identifies the sample position. The samples show no apparent differences.

Figure 9 shows the same arrangement as Figure 8 through a UV filter. The sample containing 10%  $TiO_2$  appears very dark when compared to the fabric, while the 10%  $ZrO_2$  is slightly brighter than the fabric, and the 5%  $ZrO_2$  appears much brighter than the fabric.  $TiO_2$  is typically used as a dulling agent at approximately a 2% loading, to eliminate the luster of nylon. This is the case with the nylon fill used in the arctic camouflage fabric. The loadings of 5 and 10% were used to exaggerate differences between the samples. Further spectral work will be required to more fully describe this effect, in addition to optimizing concentration levels for maximum reflectance at minimum concentration.



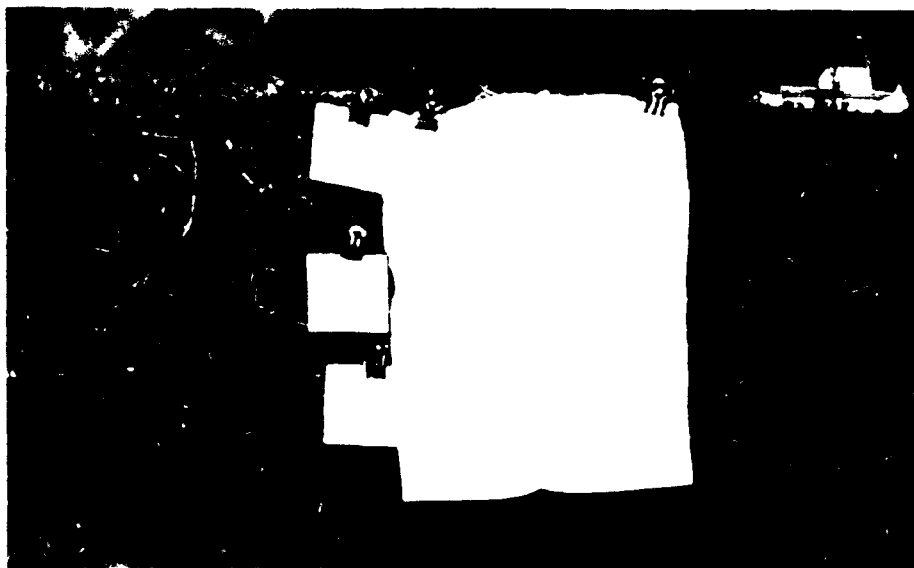


Figure 7. Comparison of Samples containing  $ZrO_2$  and  $TiO_2$  to Arctic Camouflage Fabric in Full Sunlight.

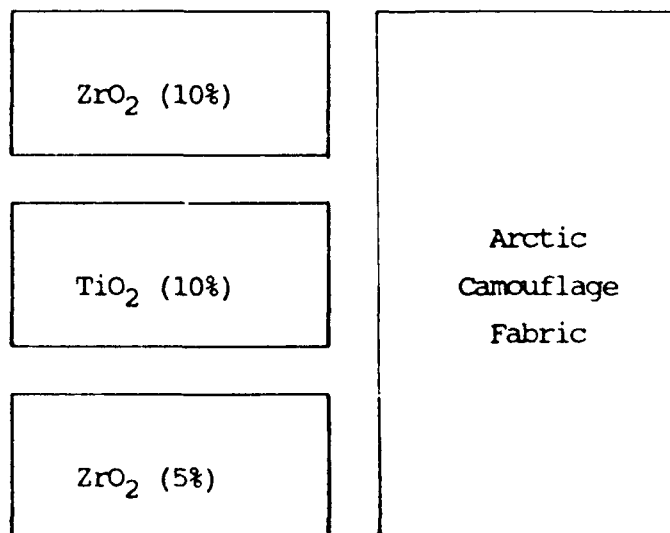


Figure 8. Sample Arrangement in Figure 7.

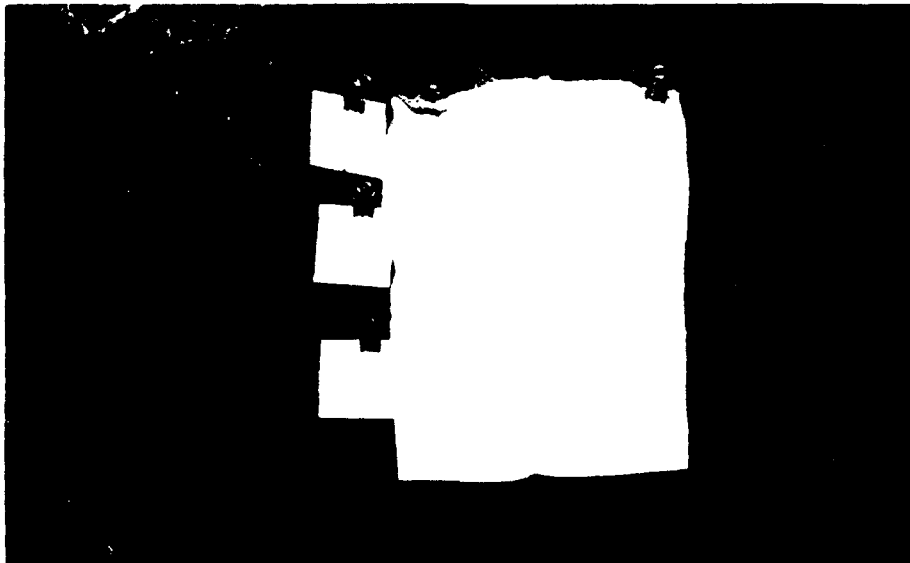


Figure 9. Comparison of Samples containing  $ZrO_2$  and  $TiO_2$  to the Arctic Camouflage Fabric in Full Sunlight using a UV Filter.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Preliminary evaluation of  $ZrO_2$  as a potential substitute for  $TiO_2$  in yarns used in the arctic camouflage material to increase UV reflectivity shows promise. Comparisons using UV photography show distinct differences between samples containing 5 or 10%  $ZrO_2$  and a sample containing 10%  $TiO_2$ . Further research will be required to determine optimum concentration levels of  $ZrO_2$  as compared to  $TiO_2$ , which is a standard additive to synthetic yarns. Additional process work will be required to prepare a textile grade yarn containing the optimized concentrations of  $ZrO_2$  and a sample of fabric prepared from this yarn for comparison to the current arctic camouflage fabric.

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3. Desert and Arctic Camouflage Garnishes, Gordon H. Johnson and Robert W. Pelz, Ferro Corporation, Independence, Ohio, report for Belvoir, AD B009230, Oct. 1975.
4. Man-Made Fibres, R.W. Moncrieff, Sixth Edition, Newnes-Butterworths, 1975.

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### SAMPLE DESCRIPTION:

Zirconium Oxide ( $\text{ZrO}_2$ )  
Purified (Anhydrous)  
Fisher Scientific Lot No: 897129  
2 micron particle size

Titanium Dioxide ( $\text{TiO}_2$ )  
Imperial Pigment Colors  
50% Titanium White (Concentrate)  
Hercules Incorporated, Batch 6-01876

Zytel Nylon 6,6 Resin  
E.I. Dupont DeNemours & Co. Inc.  
Lot No. VJ44C57

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